

# HEARTS

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Higher Education, the Arts and Schools

an experiment in educating teachers

Dick Downing & Emily Lamont  
with Mike Newby



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**How to cite this publication:**

Downing, D. and Lamont, E. with Newby, M. (2007). *HEARTS Higher Education, the Arts and Schools: an Experiment in Educating Teachers*. Slough: NFER.

Published in May 2007 by the  
National Foundation  
for Educational Research  
The Mere, Upton Park  
Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ  
[www.nfer.ac.uk](http://www.nfer.ac.uk)

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ISBN 978 1 905314 42 3

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Page design and layout by Patricia Lewis  
Cover design by Stuart Gordon

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# Preface

That's the biggest change for me I think, just the way that I'll teach in the classroom – to let the children be able to do it their way rather than being expected to do it the same and conform.

*Student teacher on the HEARTS project*

The group held the tutor and the other trainees spellbound ... it was the first time in a number of years in which I had the feeling that these individuals were animated and passionate and coming alive.

*University tutor*

*Non-conformity* is a theme informing much in the HEARTS project, and ‘animation’, ‘passion’ and ‘coming alive’ make it manifest in the real experience of people learning how to teach. Those conceiving the project intended, first, that it should revitalise the place of the arts in the experience of university students studying to become primary school teachers. More than that, though, they wanted to use practice in teaching the arts as the portal to a more thorough-going investigation into the way these students were prepared for their professional roles. HEARTS was to be an experiment in letting them – and even their tutors – ‘do it their way’.

At the time, this was – to say the least – unusual. In the early years of the twenty-first century, providers of teacher education courses, mostly the University Departments of Education (UDEs), were funded by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and inspected, regularly and often, by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Anyone wanting to become a teacher had to demonstrate competence across a wide range of Standards laid down by the Secretary of State. Ofsted’s inspection reports influenced the TTA’s funding decisions: poor quality in a course provider could result in their student numbers being cut, while failure to comply with the Standards could lead eventually to loss of accreditation. Course providers therefore adhered strictly to regulations: their survival depended upon it.<sup>1</sup>

1 Though the Standards change from time to time, and though the TTA has since become the TDA (Training & Development Agency for Schools), the system remains current at the time of writing.

Since the Government's foremost educational commitment at the time was to raise standards in literacy and numeracy among primary school children, teacher education courses focused on ensuring that new teachers were competent in those two fundamental areas of learning – to the exclusion, it sometimes seemed, of nearly everything else. By the time they entered their first post, there was very little new primary teachers didn't know about phonics. Other areas, though, faded in prominence and some – the arts, in particular – slipped almost entirely from the teacher education curriculum. It was to address this growing imbalance in the experience of student teachers that HEARTS was conceived.

Marginalisation of the arts in teacher education had been going on for some years. In 1998, the Royal Society of Arts and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation commissioned research into the situation and so serious were the findings (Rogers, 1998 and 2003) that even government ministers began to pay attention. If the arts were not to disappear entirely from the primary classroom, it was clear that something needed to be done. So it was that the Gulbenkian and Esmée Fairbairn Foundations, working with the Wednesbury Education Action Zone in the West Midlands, supported the STAR project: *Schools, Teacher Training and the Arts*. As one part of that initiative STAR supported Newman College, the University of Central England and Wolverhampton University, all local providers of initial teacher training (ITT), to develop arts teaching expertise in their students.

It was a start, but it wasn't enough. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), in its *Report* on the project (Downing and Watson, 2004), found evidence that STAR's influence on initial teacher education 'was not as far-reaching as might have been hoped. The short-term nature of the project, the initial conception and planning process and the need to establish more effective communications may well have contributed to this shortfall.' That said, NFER concluded that STAR had been 'an important learning process and should inform the establishment of further initiatives to enhance provision for the arts in ITT'. One such initiative was HEARTS.

The first purpose of HEARTS was to revitalise the place of the arts in the experience of people practising in Higher Education to become primary teachers. The second was to prompt more general questions about teacher

education – and perhaps to put some colour back into the cheeks of a system which, for many who worked in it, had become drawn and pallid. The students coming into this system knew no other, of course, and quickly became used to studying within a standardised curriculum in order to qualify. Their tutors – the older ones, at any rate – could remember less strictly-regulated times. However, resisting such constraints was fruitless. If literacy and numeracy were the sovereign concerns of the policy-makers during this period, so be it; courses would concentrate on those while other things faded to the periphery.

As far as its resources would allow, HEARTS sought in the six UDEs involved to stimulate a teacher education which was a little different, one less driven by the constant need to be vigilant lest one fall into a hapless state of non-compliance, and one with a more extensive set of ambitions. This was not to subvert either the need for rigorous entry standards into teaching (quite the opposite), nor to question the vital importance of word and number in the life of every child. Nor was it to deny that an essential task of each primary teacher was to help children succeed in those two fundamental ways of making meaning. It was, however, to claim a *better curriculum balance*. HEARTS was committed to the need for other human practices, too, to be satisfied when children went to school – practices other than reading, writing and number alone, which did not omit (as was so close to being the case) our diverse culture's many arts.

For how could the arts flourish in the lives of children – surely the time to sow the seeds of their life-long artistic experiences – if successive cohorts of newly-qualified teachers came into the profession with vanishingly slight experience of how to teach them? How could a childhood be complete if the arts were absent? What sort of teachers were we producing who knew little or nothing about them and who, as students, were given negligible grounding in how to teach them to the children they would so soon be meeting as professional educators? What consequences, as those children grew to become adults, could that have for the nation's cultural vitality and social well-being?

In the pages that follow, we can learn what happened in the HEARTS project, see how it addressed those important questions, and judge the measure of its success.

Professor Mike Newby  
*Chair, HEARTS Advisory Group*

# 1 Establishing HEARTS

## 1.1 Preparations

By the end of 2002, a group began to plan the HEARTS project. Its members came from two major charitable Trusts (the Esmée Fairbairn and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundations), each with a long-standing interest in both the arts and education; and from a university-based Faculty of Education in the person of its Dean. A project manager and an evaluator (NFER) were invited to join them. This group managed the HEARTS project throughout.

Although those planning HEARTS began to do so at a time when the place of the arts in primary teacher education was deeply compromised, more propitious signs of change were beginning to emerge in the environment surrounding the education of teachers, and even in teacher education itself. The Robinson Report, *All Our Futures* (NACCCE, 1999), had been published in 1999 and was still influential several years later. The Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) was developing cross-curricular approaches in *creativity*. An important government publication, *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003) acknowledged the role of the arts in supporting learning. Research (Downing *et al.*, 2003) was suggesting a desire in primary schools for more expertise in the arts in newly-qualified teachers. More immediately significant than any of these, however, was the revision of the Standards for entry to the profession announced by the TTA in January 2002 and introduced the following September, revisions which allowed course providers to see possibilities of an easing of the requirements of DfES Circular 4/98 (DfES, 1998). It seemed as if, by the beginning of 2003, the time might be right for a fresh initiative on the arts in primary teacher education.

Against this background, the group's first task was to design a proposal. The broad outlines of HEARTS were established and the arguments marshalled for its potential importance in the education and training of new primary

teachers. Its next task was to find the money. It made successful approaches to the following organisations:

- the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
- the Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- the National Endowment for Science, Technology & the Arts (NESTA)
- the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), later the Training & Development Agency for Schools (TDA).

## 1.2 Seeking applicants

By the autumn of 2003, sufficient funding had been promised to trigger an approach, in February of the following year, to university-based teacher educators throughout England. Applicants learned that:

The HEARTS Project aims to improve the ability of new primary teachers to teach the arts and so to enrich the learning of children and young people. We want to stimulate new approaches to the arts in initial teacher education, to help student teachers gain deeper understanding of the importance of the arts in education, and to support their practice in developing new teaching approaches to the arts in schools and classrooms.

These notes guided them further:

... we will be looking for evidence of commitment to the following principles:

### **Innovation/experimentation**

We will not fund you to do what you do already. HEARTS gives you an opportunity to innovate and to try *new ways of working*.

### **Continuity and sustainability**

HEARTS must continue longer in each participating HEI than just the year of its funding. 'Legacy' should be an important part of your consideration: how will you ensure that HEARTS has an impact and benefits the education sector in the years after the project has ended?

### Trans-disciplinary work

We will be interested in all proposals based on one or more of the arts found in the primary curriculum. However, given the teacher's role in delivering a wide range of arts experiences in schools, we will be especially interested in proposals involving more than one art-form.

### Partnership

We intend HEARTS to operate as a partnership on every level: between tutors, students, teachers and pupils; between HEIs; between the agencies sponsoring and managing the project. Other partners such as LEA advisers and artists may become involved. The roles, responsibilities and tasks of each partner in implementing the project will be negotiated by all project participants.

### Dissemination

Each HEI will be expected to contribute to the documentation and dissemination of what is learned and developed during the project. Dissemination will be an important element of the project.

The management group hoped to identify proposals which were strong not only in their own terms but which also showed signs of being complementary to and mutually supportive of the others selected. Except for the bidding process itself, HEARTS was to embody the non-competitive principle of *partnership* in encouraging UDEs, while working hard on their own projects, to see the other participants as valuable collaborators. HEARTS intended to create a community of interest which, animating that other principle of *dissemination*, could spread elsewhere in the sector and from there to the schools it served.

## 1.3 The six HEARTS departments

Sixteen UDEs applied in the first round and six were interviewed, from which three were chosen:

- University of Plymouth
- University of Winchester
- Canterbury Christ Church University.

These straight away began more detailed planning in preparation for a launch of their projects with students and partnership schools at the start of the following academic session (September 2004).

In the spring of 2005, the application process was repeated. Once again, sixteen UDEs applied, six were invited for interview and three more gained funding:

- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Sheffield Hallam University
- Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Across the two years, therefore, HEARTS funding was distributed to rural and urban centres of teacher education, operating in the north and the south of England and in the capital.

Each UDE received a grant for one year which would (for example) allow them to hire a research assistant, purchase necessary equipment, pay for dissemination costs (for example, create a CD Rom), fund activities with participating schools and arts groups, and afford buy-out cover to allow staff to give time to HEARTS in an otherwise full teaching schedule. The HEARTS fund also paid for the costs of a project manager, a project evaluator (NFER), residential events at which the participating UDEs could share planning and reflection and for disseminating the outcomes of supported activities.

## 1.4 The Advisory Group

From the beginning of its operations, an important function of the HEARTS management group was to communicate with others in influential parts of the education service and the world of the arts, explaining its work, examining progress and seeking advice on how best to sustain and develop the project. Consequently, an Advisory Group was convened, its membership including representatives from DfES, Ofsted, TDA, from the Arts Council, from primary education, primary teacher education and from those other funders (Nesta and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation) not already part of the management group itself. It met from time to time to hear reports

from the Project Manager and the Project Evaluator and ensured that HEARTS remained connected to the wider context of education and the arts.

## 1.5 The HEARTS website

It became clear once the project was under way that sufficient interest merited the setting up of a HEARTS website, now at [www.hearts.uk.com](http://www.hearts.uk.com).

## 2 The six HEARTS projects – plans and products

Summaries of the initial project plans, and of the activities and outputs they generated in each UDE, are outlined below.

### 2.1 Canterbury Christ Church University (2004–2005)

The course tutors from Canterbury aimed to enrol between twenty and twenty-five students from PGCE and third-year undergraduate courses to a HEARTS module as a *research option*. They planned to provide introductory sessions on the philosophy, neurology, psychology, research and core values associated with a cross-arts curriculum, and to discuss the application of arts approaches to Citizenship and Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). Students would undertake team-teaching in schools to deliver cross-arts projects. Their experiences were to inform the research element of their awards and presentations to their year groups. The aim was to help students create holistic approaches to arts education based on an understanding of common artistic processes and explore the educational value of the arts. HEARTS would provide an opportunity for research into the value of combined arts education. Furthermore, tutors hoped it would animate real examples for students of notions, expressed in government documents of the time, like 'creativity', 'excellence in teaching' and 'enjoyment in learning'. The Canterbury team also planned Continuing Professional Development activities for participating schools. Furthermore, they wanted to use this growing body of experiences from the HEARTS project to influence planning for future arts education and curriculum design within the University.

In the event, thirty-three students enrolled in the HEARTS module from a range of subject specialisms. It began with a two-day 'big impact' event designed to give the students a hands-on introduction to HEARTS and to stimulate their immediate involvement. The students travelled by train to

Dungeness, a Site of Special Scientific Interest on the south coast of Kent. On the train, they met – for the first time – a group of year seven pupils from a local comprehensive school, with whom they worked as equals. The barrier of teacher and pupil was broken down as both groups explored Dungeness together. The children were encouraged to lead this exploration and the arts were used as a stimulus and a tool for investigation. Tutors hoped that the pupils would develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of arts subjects. Citizenship was a secondary focus of this experience.

They held a follow-up day at the host school, where students and pupils presented their experiences of Dungeness to their peers using a variety of art forms. These were considered to be at the heart of creative teaching, thinking and learning and included collage, drawing, dance, drama, film-making, music, photography, poetry, sculpture and story-telling.

Following this event, HEARTS tutors arranged a two-day conference at which they made presentations on a variety of issues, including cross-curricular learning, spirituality and place, citizenship education and the arts, as well as on participant action research. Students worked in teams of three or four to plan a series of arts activities to investigate an issue important to the local community or to the school in which they would deliver the lessons. The activities had to involve work outside the classroom and at least some gathering of resource material (sounds, objects,



*Canterbury –  
taking the strain*

photographs, drawing, video etc.). This combination was intended to link the affective and motivating power of the arts with the relatively new expectations of the Citizenship curriculum. The students acted as participant researchers.

HEARTS students then delivered these lessons in partner schools during their research week. They spanned two days, during which they gathered data for use in their research assignments. These required them to consider the effectiveness of taking a combined arts approach as part of their particular Advanced Subject Study – often a subject outside the arts.

Throughout this process, material was gathered for use in dissemination which included students' perceptions on issues concerning teaching and creativity, examples of work produced, teaching materials and their own research. The course tutors gave presentations about HEARTS in neighbouring local education authorities and later began contributing to a range of journal articles.

An internal evaluation investigated student, teacher and tutor outcomes. An evaluation of the project was also completed by the HEARTS team based upon the assignments produced by the students, observations of the students in school and supporting tutor comments.

## 2.2 University of Plymouth (2004–2005)

The HEARTS project at the University of Plymouth explored the concept of the *imagination*, and how it might be strengthened in primary arts teaching, as well as in the training and education of student teachers. Staff anticipated that eighty student teachers would participate and that eighteen schools would support them, being used later as the basis for the internal evaluation. Their over arching aim was to encourage primary student teachers to break out of predictable teaching patterns and to adopt more interesting and creative approaches to teaching across the curriculum.

The HEARTS project's first phase focused on the current literature and considered existing approaches to the arts in partner schools in an attempt to



Plymouth – group session

identify examples of good practice, staff anticipating the construction of theoretical approaches to the development of the imagination. A Research Officer was appointed who, in her literature review, drew on a range of fields including philosophy, psychology, pedagogical theory, arts theory, arts practice, educational theory and appropriate government publications, linking the *imagination* (in the arts and in other subjects) with related concepts such as *creativity* and *memory* and *child development*. A conference was planned, open to everyone in their final BEd school experience (student teachers, school teachers, lecturers and supervisors), where early findings would be shared and discussed.

The second phase aimed to investigate how student teachers, now with a better understanding of the significance of the imagination in the arts, could incorporate this into their own teaching of art, dance, drama, music and poetry in primary school. There were plans for a web-based archive and a follow-up conference to be held with school partners and external participants.

Tutors undertook the HEARTS project mainly in the context of a well-established School Experience Preparation module and specialist Subject Pedagogy modules. Introduced to all fourth-year BEd students, it was at first met with apprehension and resistance, not only by the students but also by some members of staff. People suspected that work on the imagination

would be an extra burden at a particularly stressful time in their training and some were reluctant to participate in the research project. Fortunately, this resistance faded as the module progressed.

Students were encouraged to think unconventionally, searching for teaching methods which would excite pupils' musical or artistic imagination. To stimulate their thinking, the project encouraged alternative approaches. For example, regional arts advisers were invited to campus to talk to students, Music students ran four workshops for primary pupils at a nearby abbey, and students, tutors and class-teachers together experienced practical arts tasks and dialogue on a 'class-teacher/trainee day'.

Towards the end of the academic year, HEARTS tutors mounted a conference, attended by around ninety school representatives, student teachers and university staff. This was an opportunity to present students' work and for groups to discuss ways in which ideas raised during the project could be extended. Three keynote speakers talked about the value of imaginative and creative approaches to teaching.

A wide range of material was gathered during the project, including student responses to their initial introduction to HEARTS, field notes, responses to questionnaires from the class-teacher/trainee day, and information about students' motives for getting involved in the project. A variety of lesson plans, videos and samples of the children's work also became available. HEARTS tutors also planned a website within the Faculty as a resource for students and teachers and for the wider audience they hoped to find for their experiences.

## 2.3 University of Winchester (2004–2005)

The HEARTS team at Winchester aimed to work with tutors, artists and teachers to give fourteen primary student teachers, from a range of subject backgrounds and with widely different experiences of the arts, a deeper critical awareness of the potential for work in a number of art forms. They wanted to encourage the development of trans-disciplinary teaching and innovative ways of learning in the arts. As a result, they hoped to develop units of study that stimulated cultural awareness, and to create resources



Winchester –  
graphics

for teacher educators which might be delivered using web-based as well as face-to-face teaching. It would include workshops with a range of visiting artists, the engagement of students in a critical discourse about the arts, and teaching practice with children from diverse cultural backgrounds. The intention was to encourage students to consider ideas and practice through reflection and evaluation. All this experience would inform the introduction of a new arts-based module into the degree scheme the following autumn.

The project began with an initial session to identify ideas about primary arts education, to establish personal vision and to consider possible barriers to this vision. Three visiting artists then led day-long workshops, based in sound, movement and the visual arts, which familiarised students with a range of different art forms and encouraged an experience of the investigative and developmental processes inherent in their work. Students were introduced to a common 'trans-disciplinary language' to help them describe and account for their experiences of these workshops. Was there a lexicon which could be used particularly to express concepts in the arts in ways which were distinctive and precise? This language model was at first presented as a one which could help students make connections across the disciplines or subjects of the arts. Later, it marked the construction of a strategy to develop the arts in the primary school, with an emphasis on investigation, enquiry and development.

The students worked in groups to plan and prepare for four school-based sessions for presentation in a partnership school. They were asked to consider their visions for primary arts practice and the potential of the 'trans-disciplinary strategy' in opening up enquiring approaches to ideas and materials in the arts. This school-based work took place early, in the first term of the HEARTS year. Some of the sessions included transforming visual signals into music, sound and movement, others explored ideas of identity and individuality, and others still developed imaginary spaces through making model buildings. The children's experiences in the HEARTS lessons were shared in a final 'performance'. Students produced reflective learning journals throughout the module and chose how to be formally assessed: either through an 'interview *viva*' or on the written account of a 'dilemma' identified in their journal.

Throughout the module, HEARTS tutors disseminated their findings internally, speaking at university-wide Learning & Teaching and Research & Knowledge Transfer conferences. They also devised a new module, grounded in their growing HEARTS experience. Twenty-three students subsequently enrolled on this course, from a variety of subject specialisms and with a range of academic abilities.

An internal evaluation was carried out and further data has been generated for use in future publications.

## 2.4 Goldsmiths College, University of London (2005–2006)

The HEARTS project at Goldsmiths centred around *carnival* in the primary PGCE course. It involved tutors from a range of curriculum areas by integrating performing arts and *carnival* across the primary programme during the early stages of the project.

Letters were sent to partnership schools early in the project. The project team selected five to be HEARTS schools from nearly thirty which responded, but all were invited to attend an autumn seminar series and were promised involvement in the project at a later stage. The HEARTS schools, as far as



*Goldsmiths – carnival dance workshop*

possible, took students linked to the project on their subsequent teaching practice. Links were also established with a local authority arts advisory team which became involved in the seminar sessions and which provided support for HEARTS schools. An important feature of the Goldsmiths project, then, was to spread out to the local community.

In the autumn term, HEARTS tutors held four twilight seminars focusing on the debate about arts in education, the role of *carnival* in arts education, and the place of new technology in performing arts and carnival. They were attended by Goldsmiths staff, HEARTS school representatives, other school representatives, members of the arts advisory team and some practising artists. An action-planning meeting was held for teachers in school time and an additional meeting was also held for *carnival* artists in January to discuss particular aspects of their work.

The PGCE students participated in carnival activities during a specified week of their course in the autumn term. This included introductory lectures and practical workshops and culminated in a parade through the university campus. HEARTS teachers worked alongside the students at this event. Workshops included performance poetry, Calypso, dance and mas (*carnival* or festivities) making. Students were required to construct a film of their

*carnival* experience using a range of new ICT skills. Students later used them in dissemination of the project in schools. HEARTS teachers also used them at staff meetings in their schools.

A wide variety of material was produced, some of which was later used in schools. A web-based resource was established, as was a resource and materials store on the university campus. New course handbooks were created to be used in subsequent carnival activities. Digital resources have been accessed by students, tutors and schools in order to enhance their learning. Tutors carried out an internal evaluation of the HEARTS project.

## 2.5 Manchester Metropolitan University (2005–2006)

The HEARTS project at Manchester involved thirty third-year BA student teachers in an additional commitment to their normal course programme. Tutors originally targeted the opportunity of participating in HEARTS at third-year students studying on an arts module. Later, however, they widened this to accommodate students from other subject areas. Consequently, students had to compete in order to secure a place on the project, offered on the basis of their personal involvement with the arts.

*Manchester Metropolitan University – trombone*



Schools were also involved in the HEARTS project from the outset. Tutors sent a letter of invitation at the end of the summer term of 2005 and, of the thirty-six schools that responded, eighteen became fully involved once students arrived in the following September.

HEARTS students participated in a two-day festival of workshops, focusing on the theme of 'Location', at the Lowry Centre in Salford. The 'Lowry experience' involved their rotation around four workshops in music, dance and fine arts, each led by a practising artist and all embodying a cross-arts focus. The content of each workshop was driven by the artists' particular working practice, but each had been directed to engage the students in a variety of experiences which focused on them not as teachers but as artists. These were followed by a final combined performance in a public space. Tutors also participated, as did some of the teachers who would be hosting students in their next school placement.

In the spring term, HEARTS students drew on these workshops to plan day-long festivals for a wider student audience, working with artists to deliver the festival days. Doing so required them to plan collaboratively and to find the confidence, working alongside the artists, to teach their peers.

The thirty HEARTS students were placed in inner-city partnership schools that had expressed an interest in the project, teachers from some of which had attended the 'Lowry experience'. Though there was no formal student assessment of the HEARTS project, at the end of their school placements, students identified ways in which their planning for classroom-based work had been informed by their experiences at the Lowry Centre.

An internal evaluation was carried out by tutors and a range of material was collected for a web-based resource for students and tutors.

## 2.6 Sheffield Hallam University (2005–2006)

In order to deliver Sheffield Hallam's aims for HEARTS, a pilot module of lectures, workshops and seminars, entitled 'Creativity across the Primary Curriculum' was planned, delivered and evaluated. It was run with the second-year BA (QTS), 5–11 2005–06 student cohort.



*'I have lost my desire for absolute quiet and order in the classroom. I now know that creative work often means noise and disruption and I have learned how to allow children to take responsibility for their own work.'* (Student at SHU)

*Sheffield Hallam University – changing minds*

Six lectures were delivered by staff from SHU, looking at the nature of creativity, theories of learning, the history of the study of creativity and ways to develop creative potential. The workshops were based around the skills of creative professionals, chosen for their high levels of expertise and long experience, as well as for their varied teaching approaches, who worked alongside both students and staff teaching on the module. They took place off campus, most typically in the artist's own environment. The workshops dealt with the use of ICT, creative writing, music, sculpture, dance, drama and film studies. Each included practical activities for students and suggestions for work with pupils.

Seminar sessions followed the workshops. HEARTS tutors helped the students to explore the nature of creativity in the arts and to apply what they had learned to their own creative development and to the teaching they would be doing in their placement schools.

HEARTS funding was used to buy thirty new cameras, able to take short video clips and record sounds as well as still digital images. Students were familiarised with these cameras and used them extensively in their assignments. They were assessed through a piece of work submitted on CD Rom which demonstrated their creative development in three workshop areas, the planning and evaluation of one creative session of work with children, and ideas about how one workshop art form could be used to support children's creative development. The assignments had to include reference to relevant theories, research and literature.

Throughout this process, material was collected for use in the project evaluation and dissemination. This included feedback from Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) discussion boards and emails to staff, anonymous module assessment forms, student assignments on CD Roms and written feedback from module staff. An internal evaluation investigated a range of learning outcomes and exploration of particular issues such as comfort zones, innovation and coherence.

# 3 Managing HEARTS

A key feature of the HEARTS project in all six universities was the extent to which the management group offered support. Its members visited tutorial teams on campus, organised residential weekends, held evaluation visits and assisted in other ways, too (for instance, in helping to set up an intranet in which tutors could swap ideas and experiences across institutional boundaries). This helped to ensure that a sense of shared endeavour became firmly established among all those taking part.

## 3.1 The planning residentials

Soon after succeeding in their applications, HEARTS UDEs were invited to spend a weekend away at *planning residentials*. For both groups, the location chosen was Villiers Park, Foxton in Cambridgeshire. During the second of these (June 2005), participants from the first year of HEARTS (their projects now approaching completion) were invited to join their new colleagues (whose projects would start with students the following September) so that they could pass on some of their experiences and alert them to the opportunities – and some of the possible pitfalls – in what they were about to undertake.

The planning residentials served the essential function of helping to build a HEARTS community. The aim was share insights and expertise and so maximise the impact of the UDEs in working towards change in initial teacher education. Participants spent time in plenary sessions, practical workshops led by each university team, discussions, and periods during which individual teams could spend time together in detailed planning – something which, back in the packed schedules of their university lives, tutors often reported finding almost impossibly difficult to arrange. The residentials were seen as a valuable opportunity for tutors to share their experiences, successes and difficulties with one another, and to explore the potential for integrating HEARTS approaches into their courses. It was also

valuable as a way of integrating the management team with those undertaking the projects in their departments.

### Aims, visions and practice

The planning residencies called for the defining and redefining of aims, allowing each UDE to outline for the others their vision of how HEARTS would impact on students and teachers, how it might influence their institution's work more generally, and even how it might come to have an influence elsewhere within the sector. Tutorial teams had an opportunity to explore each other's ideas in mixed groups and creative practicals, as well as in plenary sessions where the overarching vision of HEARTS could be explored. Tutors recognised that they were not alone in their ambitions for change in arts education. However, they acknowledged, too, that the ambitions of their senior managers, who needed to reflect the requirements laid on them by the system of teacher education outlined in the introduction above, might not entirely coincide with their own, and that the real challenge was to act as change agents in their institutions.

*Foxton – dance routine*



## Planning

Each team aimed to finalise plans, define timelines, identify milestones for reporting and points at which to engage with their wider partnerships. The management group was also able to review progress and discuss future needs for the HEARTS project as a whole.

## Outcomes and outputs

Time was allocated for UDEs to consider what outputs might be generated from their departmental projects, and from the HEARTS project as a whole, and how these might influence policy and practice. Ambitions for outcomes, as set out in the project proposals, were also reviewed.

## Partnership

Partnership emerged as an important feature of the planning of HEARTS projects. Some degree of partnership already existed within each UDE – within each tutorial team, with partner schools, and with local authorities – and two spoke of the potential to work alongside clusters of schools involved with *Creative Partnerships*, the national project supporting the development of creativity in schools. Participants looked at previous research into partnership as a tool for generating change in education. Setting up partnerships, allocating responsibilities and the mechanisms of partnership were all examined. The residential helped, too, to establish the partnerships which were to grow within the HEARTS community.

## Practicalities

The planning residencies also allowed the management team to deal with many of the questions (of money, timing, reporting lines, etc.) which UDE teams raised with them.

## 3.2 The progress residencies

Two further residencies were held to assess progress, the first (May 2005) at Bore Place, Kent and the second (May 2006) at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park near Wakefield. As with the second planning residential, representatives of

the first cohort of HEARTS UDEs spent some time with those in the second cohort, who were there throughout the two days. Furthermore, some members of the Advisory Group also attended for the main part of the residential, as – for one session – did two members of staff at the Sculpture Park.

### **Progress reports**

Each UDE was given the opportunity to present to the others and to the management group their progress to date. In every case, there remained a high degree of commitment to the project, with new members becoming involved and statements from tutors describing the impact of HEARTS on students and schools. People reported on activities undertaken, learning achieved and pedagogies and partnerships developed. They also considered the impact on their institutions resulting from HEARTS, highlighting challenges yet to be overcome. Those who, by the second residential, had completed their HEARTS year, focused on the completion of any outstanding activities, on how they had tracked the HEARTS students' subsequent progress, sustained its impact and on dissemination undertaken and materials available.

It was also at the progress residencies that staff began to focus on the fact that their HEARTS funding was finite and would run out at the end of the year.

### **The process of change**

Although participants at the progress residencies considered that HEARTS was still at an early stage in their institutions, outcomes for both students and tutors were beginning to emerge, subtly and incrementally. HEARTS' profile had been raised in departments through visits from members of the HEARTS management group and through protected funding which provided staff with more status and the power to make resource decisions. Tutors were keen to carry on with HEARTS, to take it further, to personalise and integrate it more securely within their institutions and they talked of informal staff discussions, reference to HEARTS at staff meetings and the provision of staff development opportunities as being important in helping to effect this integration. Many signs were emerging of the potential in

HEARTS for longer-term impact on courses. All UDEs reported the potential of the student voice to encourage change in the school curriculum.

However, tutors also reported obstacles to change. These included a degree of institutional ignorance about HEARTS; for change to become embedded, people acknowledged the need for departmental awareness to spread. Tutors also reported that senior managers were answerable to external agencies as well as to internal requirements and that this could sometimes inhibit change. Fear of uncertainty amongst UDE staff and students also stood in the way of significant change and needed to be overcome.

## **Partnerships**

A shared understanding of the enterprise was seen as fundamental to partnership development. Furthermore, the time involved in setting up such partnerships should not be underestimated. Participants stressed that new ideas should be introduced over a long time-scale in order to encourage voluntary involvement, and to minimise potential resistance. They felt that, to build support, it was best to preach to the converted first before speaking to those who may be harder to convince.

Strong partnerships with schools were evident in all six UDEs, partnerships already long-established on initial teacher education schemes. In some cases, schools had requested involvement and HEARTS thus became a shared endeavour with them.

Where partnerships operated with arts organisations, tutors reported on the need to identify an appropriate artist to deliver the message as well as finding one well-equipped to work in schools.

## **Evaluation**

Progress residential allowed participants to explore together what plans were in place for internal evaluations, including the type of data collection and outputs that would emerge. Each project team was able to identify areas of particular interest within its HEARTS project on which to focus their internal evaluation. These included the distinct contribution of the artist, assessment of students, partnerships, and students as agents of change.



*Foxton – workshop*

Several UDEs had brought in colleagues from elsewhere in their departments, and even from other departments, to act as critical friends and to offer them objective insights into the quality of their work in HEARTS.

## **Dissemination**

The material available for dissemination was discussed and plans were made for wider dissemination of HEARTS over the following years.

## **Assessment**

The challenges of assessing students' involvement with HEARTS were discussed at some length, as were the solutions being found by tutorial teams. All UDEs agreed that assessment was a key area for development and consideration. Measurable assessments of students' work were being made, for example, through multi-media productions, the achievement of ITE standards, the use of *vivas* or written accounts of solving 'dilemmas' emerging from students' reflective logs, by creating web-based media, and so on. It emerged that students felt more comfortable when working towards a clear assessment procedure with tangible outcomes. In one UDE, tutors reported at least one case of strongly-voiced student indignation at the very

idea that work in the arts could be *assessed* (as could a written assignment) since, in the students' view, there was no reliable way to judge an artefact or creative performance<sup>2</sup>. This opened up interesting and perhaps important questions about assessing that other kind of creative performance which all students in teacher education are there to practise – their classroom performance as the teachers of children and young people.

### 3.3 Management visits and support

Each UDE received at least two visits from one or more members of the HEARTS management group, one early in the project and another towards the close of the academic year. These were largely focused on refining the plans made by each UDE and reviewing progress to date.

### 3.4 Evaluation visits

As part of the ongoing evaluation of HEARTS, the NFER scheduled visits to each of the participating UDEs. The first visits took place during November and December 2004, approximately six months after the planning residential. Each visit was designed, as far as possible, to provide the opportunity to speak to the following stakeholders:

- teachers from schools involved in HEARTS
- students involved in the projects
- members of the local HEARTS management team
- someone at a higher management level within the UDE such as the head of department, dean of faculty, etc.
- a member of staff involved in researching HEARTS at institutional level.

As far as possible, this sample was achieved. Visiting each UDE and speaking with a range of people allowed for a variety of HEARTS experiences to be

2 University staff working in the areas of art and design, music, media and performance could have provided useful points of reference in this respect.

explored. Second visits took place in July 2005 and focused largely on the emergent outcomes of the three projects (see section 4).

A similar sequence was repeated a year later for the second cohort of HEARTS UDEs.

### 3.5 The web log

As a result of discussions during the first planning residential, it was decided that some vehicle for communication should be set up for the UDE, management and evaluation teams. An intranet website was established so that UDEs could submit reports electronically, at least once a month. The reports were intended to serve as a route through which advice and support could be sought from colleagues, and also as a means of reporting progress to the management and evaluation teams.

Although the submission of web log entries reduced over time, where submissions were entered, they contained interesting information. Written in a very accessible way, they allowed the sharing of progress in an effective and user-friendly format. The log became a tool for documenting activities, changes to activities, sharing problems and seeking advice. It was also useful for sharing new understandings or for comparing the practicalities of delivering HEARTS in institutions. The reports contributed to documenting progress and to demonstrating the learning process of HEARTS.

The management group assessed the potential returns from more positive promotion of the web log for the second group of HEARTS UDEs and made it clear from the outset that regular contribution to the log was a condition of grant. Each team agreed and the reports received proved a useful form of communication, enabling team members to document their progress alongside any difficulties or successes so that others could learn from what they reported.

# 4 Outcomes

Evidence for what follows has been drawn from NFER interviews with students, tutors and senior staff members at each UDE and from internal UDE evaluations.

## 4.1 Differences

HEARTS operated in the six participating UDEs over more than two years. During this time, it is inevitable that some differences emerged between the first and second groups, not least because of the developing context influencing primary teacher education. Before going on to examine the far more extensive common ground shared between all six HEARTS UDEs, some of these differences are identified below:

From the outset, the HEARTS management group asked project managers to outline their plans and to refine them in the light of discussion and reflection. (Given that the overall project sought innovation and change, it would have been inappropriate to operate otherwise.) It is therefore not surprising that changes were made to original plans once projects got under way. This was much more apparent, however, in the first group of UDEs. The most significant were those at Plymouth, where the intended literature review on imagination was deferred. There was also a shift of focus from *teaching creativity in the arts* to *teaching creatively*, and fewer students eventually became involved in HEARTS than were initially anticipated. Fewer changes occurred within Canterbury and Winchester, although the website at Winchester did not materialise within the planned time-scale.

For students, perhaps the most pronounced difference was the degree of initial apprehension surrounding the three earlier HEARTS projects compared to those in the later ones. Fewer students in the later group resisted involvement as those before had done. Although students from the second group of UDEs expressed some insecurities before workshop sessions

(being anxious about their skills in poetry or dance, for example), these subsided once they became immersed in the sessions – indeed, some discovered new or dormant skills that they had not previously recognised or celebrated. One likely reason is that, by the time the second group began its work, project plans were clearer and the importance of arts in primary education was more widely recognised. Tutors in the first group were more ready to confess to a lack of clarity about how their HEARTS projects would manifest themselves and this perhaps communicated itself to students.

A second difference for students was one of the balance between analytical consideration of teaching and the practical acquisition of new knowledge and skills. In the first group, although addressing classroom practice, students and tutors referred to the opportunity that HEARTS had created for reflection, stimulating debate of a more overtly theoretical kind about the arts and concepts of creativity. Students in the second group, by contrast, undertook projects which were more directly oriented towards practice and the development of new teaching ideas and better understanding of how to teach the arts in the primary curriculum.

One operational difference between the two groups was the greater readiness in the second to use spaces outside the campus or school classroom. Only one UDE in the first group took students off campus. In the second group, though, all three UDEs took students to different places, the value of using alternative teaching environments to encourage creativity and explore the arts emerging more strongly in their student feedback.

For tutors, differences across the two groups were less marked. For example, stronger working relationships amongst UDE staff became apparent in all six UDEs. The opportunities HEARTS provided for discussion about arts education, for joint planning across disciplines, and for re-igniting passions for the arts in education, were similarly evident among all tutorial staff involved.

A firmer commitment to new courses emerging from HEARTS projects was a little more evident in the second group of UDEs than in the first, but this was because the timing of their projects coincided more closely with course re-validations and with the more encouraging context of emerging government

policy. Nonetheless, the commitment to the ideas informing HEARTS and a readiness to make changes was as strongly evident in the first as in the second group of tutors.

## 4.2 Shared outcomes

What follows identifies outcomes shared across the two groups of UDEs.

### 4.2.1 Departmental outcomes

#### Profile and reputation

HEARTS raised the profile of work in the arts in primary teacher education: a key outcome for each institution. Furthermore, winning HEARTS funding brought a degree of external recognition to the departments. Tutors within the departments enjoyed the esteem which winning external funding gave them and said that participating in HEARTS sent messages to others, in and outside their UDE, about the value of arts in education – messages which, in some cases, had not been heard for many years. Tutors felt that their professionalism and research abilities were boosted: ‘It is an opportunity for education staff to be doing creative work and innovative work rather than just teacher training.’ One UDE was particularly proud of the image that HEARTS conveyed externally: ‘that we are open-door, accessible, open for partnership’. Other senior members of staff were proud that their UDE’s reputation with schools would be enhanced by their involvement in HEARTS.

#### Departmental support

Support from course managers was perceived as having been essential in each UDE in securing continuation of the HEARTS project beyond the initial year of activity. The personal interest of senior managers and their awareness of the need for change, and of how HEARTS could support that change, were key factors contributing to their support.

## Clarity

The clarity of focus of the projects, or lack of it, affected outcomes. Where the consensus on purpose and aims was clearest, the project developed rapidly. Where there was less clarity, though grappling with ideas as part of a collective dialogue might have stimulated intellectual rigour, it also resulted in the slower realisation of outcomes and sometimes in discomfort among those involved.

## Course change

Although funded as a one-year initiative, there was clear evidence in each of the participating UDEs at the end of their projects that HEARTS would continue in some form. An impressive legacy was emerging in the form of changes to and developments in course structures, although we should be careful not to ascribe these entirely to the experience of HEARTS since this took place at a time when developments involving creativity, excellence and enjoyment in any case needed attention. Though some departmental managers said that the type of work undertaken through HEARTS would not have otherwise have happened, others felt they would inevitably have arrived at change, but more slowly. In either case, accounts from managers suggested that the presence of HEARTS and the debate it generated advanced such development, resulting in more significant changes than might otherwise have occurred. Furthermore, there was a widespread perception among them that the HEARTS project provided a valuable test-bed for curriculum developers to prepare for necessary changes in their ITE provision. This legacy also appeared to be growing; there were firm plans in at least two UDEs to spread creative activity across all subject disciplines in the drive to achieve a more cross-curricular approach to ITE, rather than defining it as a discrete area of the curriculum.

Whatever the causal connection, it was clear that modules supported by the HEARTS project resulted, or would result, in new or modified course elements. Such developments were supported by departmental managers and encouraged by the internal dissemination of the positive outcomes of HEARTS and the willingness of colleagues within each UDE to continue work initiated by their colleagues. Project tutors sought ways to integrate subjects that had previously been treated as self-contained curriculum areas.

In one case, a common language of artistic practice was explored and in another the dialogue between tutors from different arts disciplines was a feature. In a third case, the relationship with other (non-arts) subject areas became a fundamental element of development work. In two institutions, there was a greater emphasis on the arts in course re-validations, and all six formulated firm plans to provide future students with similar opportunities to those created by HEARTS. Departments either determined to introduce entirely new modules or to integrate approaches developed by HEARTS into existing ones. In at least one UDE, a new module was introduced. In another, a distinct method was incorporated as central to the delivery of an established course. In a third, tutors willingly agreed to 'donate' some of their teaching hours to establish a new HEARTS module.

### **Cross-curricular collegiality**

The development of better partnership working between tutors was a significant outcome in all projects. Managers, in particular, felt that this was important since the development of courses in the near future would require closer collaboration between specialists in developing courses that addressed cross-curricular themes.

### **Assessment**

Assessment emerged as a key theme. HEARTS provided the opportunity for previously untried assessment methods to be tested, and encouraged debate about the specialised processes of assessment in the arts. One UDE adopted a new and challenging approach to assessment using CD Rom presentations. Another did not formally assess but relied on multi-modal presentations to convey the learning processes of HEARTS and encouraged students to meet the Standards through participation in the project. A third UDE had not prioritised assessment, but, after discussions at a progress residential, became keen to consider how best to assess this type of training in the future, given that assessing creative practice (notwithstanding students' performances on teaching practice) could sometime challenge familiar assessment procedures.

## Archival output

A wide range of materials was produced in the UDEs for and by HEARTS which would become available for subsequent teaching and learning. Examples included teaching resources, module plans, reading lists, web-based documents, ICT guidance, and student presentations, assessments and teaching materials. Some of these, made available on the internet, were being used by schools. In this way, HEARTS stimulated the enrichment of the materials stock in the participating UDEs and in others which, in the future, might want to access it.

## Critical reflection

The willingness of staff to reflect upon their work, both in devising and in supporting the HEARTS modules, was a very important factor in securing the success of the projects. Styles of reflection varied between individuals, however, and between UDEs, spanning the range from 'confident and critical' through 'cautious and critical' to 'anxious and critical'.

## Research

Research featured in the HEARTS projects in a variety of ways. UDE staff advanced their own research into curriculum and pedagogy through developing and supporting these modules, reaching different stages in disseminating research findings by the end of the project. At least one tutor registered for a



*Goldsmiths – drawing*

doctorate as a direct result of HEARTS. Students also had to research teaching approaches for their work in schools and many indicated that this was a novel experience, suggesting a previous diet of delivering existing teaching plans. Their write-ups remain within some UDEs as a resource for the future.

#### 4.2.2 Outcomes for artists

The artists involved in HEARTS were not left unchanged. For some, it was their first experience working in education and it developed their thinking. One of the artists reported that he had established good relationships with the partner schools and hoped to work more closely with them in future. He had also developed his techniques and would deliver his sessions differently in the future as a result. 'I am learning about working with children and schools and becoming more honed in what I do.' He also felt that he had learned how to work with student teachers more successfully. One tutor recognised possibilities in the UDE for supporting artists in working with student teachers. Others observed that the artists benefited from closer communication with course tutors through a series of seminar sessions: 'When they go into schools now they will have the ideas about structures and pedagogical inputs that they will have got from working with the team.'

*The Deer Shelter, Bretton*



#### 4.2.3 Outcomes for schools

Although not thoroughly researched for the NFER evaluation, there was some evidence that HEARTS had an impact on the schools involved. For example, schools benefited from receiving practising artists, from attending workshop sessions and seminars at the university, and from the presence of well-trained student teachers. In one UDE, the relationship between schools and the university changed as a result of the experience; the school partnership would normally have involved UDE tutors visiting to assess students, but a more collaborative relationship was established subsequently, in which the artists, the partner schools and UDE worked together on curriculum developments. These schools were also able to use a number of resources for arts education provided by the HEARTS project.

#### 4.2.4 Outcomes for university staff

Tutors' enthusiasm for the endeavour was clear from the start. For the staff of all of the UDEs, HEARTS was an unexpected and welcome opportunity. Frustration with a prescriptive curriculum, and with the primacy of Standards rather than quality, meant that many tutors needed little encouragement to become involved.

Nonetheless, many were challenged by HEARTS. Some, particularly among the colleagues of those in first group, were said to have been resistant to engaging imaginatively alongside their students. Although tutors felt that team-working could be liberating, motivating and productive, it was not always without its disadvantages. Some tutors felt personally challenged, and were protective of their subject expertise, perhaps fearful of the danger of their art form being bundled along with others into a 'combined arts' package. In some projects, tutors were also forced to confront their own creativity and to work beyond the habitual boundaries of their own subjects.

Other tutors, however, embraced the opportunity to work collaboratively with those from different subject areas. Some believed that they were, once again, doing work that they had abandoned regretfully with the introduction of the National Curriculum and the many demands in teacher education for greater compliance and accountability. Some older tutors and

school teachers perceived the 'new' approaches embodied in HEARTS as the reintroduction of practices that had long been lost from the curriculum.

It is interesting that some of the tutor outcomes reflected those of the students – developments in cross-curricular working and skills-development for example, were shared by both students and tutors. Indeed, changed relationships between tutors and students were also noted as a significant outcome by some of those interviewed, reflecting the more open and 'democratic' pedagogies that were explored as a result of HEARTS. Tutors referred to their more equal partnership with students, in which they collaborated in an exploration of learning with no predetermined destinations.

### **Collegiality**

Probably the strongest partnership that evolved out of the HEARTS projects for tutors was the collegiality operating between staff within each institution.

It's been very interesting how different people can break out of their little niches and come together... part of what I'm continuing to learn is how to break down those barriers, and how to work with people's strengths – you've got to find ways if you want to work in cross-disciplinary ways.

*Tutor*

This manifested itself in a variety of ways. HEARTS provided course tutors with protected time in which to meet, discuss and make plans. It also gave them opportunities for close working and clearer channels of communication to be developed among colleagues.

In one institution, team teaching was a feature of the HEARTS project: 'It's really good for us to be able to draw on each other's areas of expertise and experience.' The opportunity to work in this way was rare, but valued as a means of pooling ideas and encouraging collaborative working. It also encouraged further discussion about creativity and how this could best be explored with students.

Collegiality extended beyond the immediate parameters of the project team to primary ITE colleagues elsewhere in the UDEs. Subject boundaries were broken down as members of staff from outside the arts became involved

with HEARTS. 'It started to emerge that we are using similar techniques as a way into different areas. That was really informative and I found that kind of learning really quite challenging.' Through working outside their usual subject areas, staff identified pockets of good arts practice across a range of curriculum areas and began to recognise the use of the arts in other subject disciplines.

Managers identified the value of the HEARTS residential in giving the opportunity for the co-ordinators to work with colleagues from other UDEs.

In some cases, other university departments (English, theatre education, ICT, etc.) also became involved, extending partnerships beyond the immediate primary ITE staff.

### **Partnerships beyond the UDE**

Partnerships with schools, artists, other UDEs and, in at least one case, a local authority arts adviser were also established or further developed as a result of HEARTS.

It has given me new insights into working with schools and also with artists – I've heard them present to the schools in seminars, I've worked alongside them, working with the students. Before I was involved, but now I feel more in partnership with them, which has been great.

*Tutor*

Where partnerships with artists already existed, these were strengthened. For example, seminars allowed more theoretical ideas to be explored, some joint planning to take place and mutual learning to occur. For some tutors, HEARTS encouraged a new awareness of the range of arts organisations and artists that work in schools, or increased awareness of existing partnerships that had not previously been fully exploited.

Partnerships with schools were also strong, being involved in seminar sessions, in events featuring practising artists and also in the planning for student placements. One tutor visited HEARTS schools and another worked alongside a practising teacher in delivering the HEARTS module to students. Tutors considered this to be important in recognising the practicalities of working through the arts within the primary school. Links with a local arts



adviser were also established, allowing HEARTS learning to reach a wider network of schools.

### Regenerated enthusiasm

Members of staff from all UDEs reported that their HEARTS experience had been enjoyable and rejuvenating.

It has really regenerated individuals. We have been working in such an inspired way and putting ourselves at risk. It stimulates and renews energy for developing courses, to see things differently in course design. It is stimulating different types of opportunities within the structures that are there, but also opening up the potential for how things might be.

*Tutor*

They spoke of feeling 'regenerated and enthused' and maintained that they had grown in confidence in the arts and within their departments as a result of their experiences. Some tutors claimed that HEARTS had rekindled their creativity and professional interests in the arts and the processes of learning, others that it had been a form of 'refreshment' to see students operating in a different, more flexible and independent way. A senior member of staff in one institution noted how staff morale was lifted as a result of HEARTS, another that staff had become 'energised'.

Importantly, HEARTS reasserted the significance of arts education in ITE courses, bringing the arts tutors into a more prominent position within their departments: 'It's broadening the curriculum and redressing the decline in importance of arts education. It gives status to staff development in this area', said one. Given that some tutors had perceived arts to be 'on the back burner', it was encouraging to see the value of arts and creativity now being stressed across all subject disciplines. This was particularly important in one institution where the arts, particularly drama, had been suffering from reduced timetabling in recent years: 'It has given some of them [course tutors] renewed self-confidence. There was a time in teacher education where there were more liberal opportunities for creative activities and developments – this has been a really nice way to show that these things still count and are still valid.'

### **Skills and staff development**

Tutors spoke of developing a number of skills and creative abilities and of 're-thinking' or challenging their teaching strategies after attending workshops alongside students.

We have lots of habits that get consolidated because of the way in which we design courses – they don't encourage innovation. You've got to do some work like this to remind oneself of active ways of working – I'm keen to use these now.

*Tutor*

One UDE hoped that some of the tutors would be able to run similar sessions without the artists during the next academic year. The experience also prompted them to reconsider their ideas about how artists should work in

schools and to revisit some of their theoretical positions concerning the teaching of the arts in school. For example, just being involved in the HEARTS project 'pushed people to develop their teaching skills and their thoughts about arts and creativity'. One tutor recognised that teaching art involves rigour and challenge, something that is difficult for teachers to introduce given that they lack the experience of an artist. She also believed that the introduction of openness and room for uncertainty in her teaching might encourage more creativity among her students. 'I have been thinking about teaching creatively, and for creativity', she said. HEARTS was also praised for allowing tutors to teach to their own strengths.

### **Developments in cross-curricular working**

Like the students, tutors also benefited from developing a more cross-curricular approach to their teaching.

*A new approach to arts education for me is the cross-curricular nature of it and also the cross-discipline aspect of art forms.*

*Tutor*

They enjoyed finding connections between different subjects and valued the 'joining up' promoted by HEARTS. Being able to work in this way was seen as a rare opportunity, something one tutor had felt inhibited from doing for over fifteen years. In another UDE, the new degree course was subsequently re-validated to contain a cross-curricular module following HEARTS (the first cross-curricular module of its type in the institution). One tutor thought that the cross-curricular element would lead to a change in practice within their UDE as HEARTS encouraged them to use all elements in their teaching and to encourage students to think of cross-overs.

#### **4.2.5 Outcomes for students**

Students whose own school studies were defined by the National Curriculum had experienced teaching largely organised to reach predetermined outcomes. Some students participating in HEARTS, particularly in the first group of UDEs, expressed initial feelings of discomfort, resistance or apprehension at the time of their recruitment to the

project, feelings caused by misunderstanding, fear of the unknown, anxiety about workloads or about qualifications. All institutions sought to press students to think for themselves and to go beyond the 'worksheet mentality' or the well-established practice of teaching familiar and sometimes predetermined schemes of work. In some UDEs, students were asked to explore their particular teaching styles and the nature of their own learning relationship with tutors and pupils. Through experiencing these new relationships, students came to understand the greater range of teaching possibilities open to them.

Local evaluations, the perceptions of UDE staff and early testament from students themselves indicated that many of them had transformative experiences. Comments to tutors and written reports and assignments offer significant insights into the nature of their learning. They suggest that not only were students realising unexpected potential in themselves, but also becoming aware of previously unnoticed abilities in their pupils. Several suggested that it was unfortunate that such realisations occurred so late in their courses.

Outcomes identified below suggest ways in which students first experienced a direct impact upon their professional skills and later found that their personal development changed in consequence.

### **Acquisition of new knowledge and skills**

Students reported that they had learned a number of new skills, dependent upon the art forms to which they were exposed.

*It's definitely enhanced my knowledge – the visual art was brilliant, the use of materials and building on things.*

*Student*

Broadening students' experiences of the arts equipped them with new skills to incorporate into their teaching practice and new ways of delivering lessons in schools. In one UDE, the project resulted in newly-acquired knowledge extending beyond art forms to an appreciation of different cultural backgrounds. Tutors also stressed the importance of students being given the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge of creative practices.

We need them to be able to cope with the core curriculum but also be well-versed in creative practice so they understand how the arts work in the curriculum and how they aren't an impediment.

*Tutor*

Students believed that they developed a deeper understanding of the potential of arts in education and expressed increased confidence in practising their skills and delivering arts lessons in the future.

### **New approaches to learning**

Some of the students believed that their approach to learning had changed as a result of their HEARTS experience.

I'd always thought that reading things was the best way to learn ... but that day I learned that you didn't need to write loads of things down. It changed the way that I think you can learn things just through doing it and not having to read it or write it down.

*Student*

Students recognised the value of learning in spaces outside the classroom, of learning through a more practical, directly-involved approach and of learning through creative or artistic activities. They also became more aware of different learning styles and began to appreciate how the arts could provide some pupils with the opportunity to excel. One said, 'There are so many different ways of expressing yourself – through dance, through music, through making costumes. Different people can come into the limelight, which is really important for children in schools. Children who are struggling in numeracy or literacy get the chance to show their creative, artistic or musical side.'

### **Changes to classroom practice**

Every student consulted through the evaluation claimed that their experience of HEARTS would result in changes to their classroom practice.

That's the biggest change for me I think, just the way that I'll teach in the classroom – to let the children be able to do it their way rather than being expected to do it the same and conform.

*Student*



#### *Sculpture park seminar*

Through new ways of learning, and the development of confidence and knowledge within the arts and creativity, the students began to consider new teaching techniques and develop ideas for their classroom practice. One student planned to allow pupils to do more 'hands on' activities, another claimed that she would 'make things a bit more interesting. You can think more creatively and about how you would interest the children more quickly than you would normally.' Other students noted that they learned how to teach the arts over a series of lessons rather than in a single session. Another claimed to have learned more about structuring and breaking subjects down for children. They learned new ways of using arts subjects in the curriculum and also in whole-school initiatives.

Tutors were also keen to stress the impact of HEARTS on their students' future practice: 'It's given them a model in how to incorporate the arts, [which] can often be seen as an afternoon activity. The project has given the arts a higher status in the eyes of the students and they have taken it on board and see it as a vital part of their practice now.' Evidence of actual changes in practice included the use of creative approaches in geography

lessons and confidence in the creative use of the arts in final student placements.

### Cross-curricular learning

Both students and tutors described how the HEARTS experiences enhanced their recognition and enthusiasm for cross-curricular learning through the arts.

A learning outcome is knowing there are different ideas, like turning a Lowry painting into a dance, how you can have cross-curricular links.

*Student*

As one tutor said, 'They are seeing the arts as a way of working outwards into the curriculum.' HEARTS allowed students to view the curriculum as less compartmentalised. Tutors were concerned that ITE courses were frequently taught in blocks and that students increasingly had no experience of topic work. As a result, students had little knowledge of cross-curricular teaching and were unfamiliar with the concept of curriculum coherence. As a result of HEARTS, and now realising the potential of cross-curricular work, students reported a desire to do more and began to recognise how topics could be linked. 'You can have one topic and everything can feed into it', said one. For example, students suggested using *calypso* to educate children about music and literacy simultaneously.

### Enhanced awareness of creativity

One of the key outcomes for students was an enhanced awareness of *creativity*.

It's bought awareness of what creativity really is. Before, you just thought of it as art or drawing – that sort of thing. It makes you think about it and have a broader mind and think beyond the box a bit more. It's certainly brought awareness and I think that this will be helpful in the classroom.

*Student*

This emerged in two distinctive ways. First, and despite some initially negative perceptions of their own abilities, students came to recognise their own creativity. 'I went in thinking I can't draw, but achieved a lot – I can do this! Art at school was so focused on being able to do it right, but this was about it being creative.' As a result, many students developed a more 'have a go' attitude to artistic tasks and came to have faith in the idea that 'everyone

is capable of being creative'. Other students flourished through a rekindling of latent skills. Tutors observed how students began to engage in their own artistic activities and how the contact with practising artists challenged their creative abilities. They also cited cases of broadened thinking and creative ideas in subsequent work and in the HEARTS assessment. Some students later went on to pursue their talents in their own time – for instance, within one UDE, they began to play musical instruments, enrolled in dance classes, wrote poetry and ran their own creative workshops.

Second, students reported a better understanding of *creativity* as a concept. For example, some said that they 'learned to embrace creativity' and discovered how to be more creative in school. 'I'm trying to harness my own creativity to see how I can throw it out to children and hopefully make them creative as well', said a student while another added, 'I can't see how you could go into school and expect the children to be creative, without having a go yourself first.'

### Introducing the unusual

By working in spaces other than the classroom, students (particularly in the second group of UDEs) were exposed to new possibilities in education, enriching their HEARTS experience and broadening their ideas for their own teaching.

*Using different surroundings ... using different sorts of teaching spaces, it was a lovely way of doing it.*

*Student*

The sentiments expressed in these comments were not unusual: 'Because it was at the Lowry, it was different to what we do here, but definitely valuable. It was exciting to learn somewhere else.' 'The location was good; the dance studio was perfect. Sometimes, in classrooms, you can't get the right set-up.'

The move from a familiar setting was commented upon by the Head of ITE in one UDE: 'The fact that [the tutors] bought in high profile artists and groups and made the event high profile had a real impact on the students. It is a very clear marker as to how exciting education can be when you dare to throw off the normalities of the timetable, which increasingly in education

we are struggling to do, and schools can become quite boring places and constrained.'

Tutors, too, were enthusiastic for working outside the classroom. They valued the experience for modelling for students what was possible in education and for raising awareness of the rich range of resources available to schools in their local areas.

## Enjoyment

Most of the students involved in the evaluations reported that they enjoyed their HEARTS experience.

*The sessions were practical, lively, engaging, funny and also helped to release a lot of tension and energy.*

*Student*

The practical nature of the artistic inputs was particularly valued – students enjoyed working with the artists and left practical sessions enthused, energised and inspired. One tutor from outside the immediate HEARTS team claimed it was evident which students were involved with HEARTS and which were not, saying, 'They had a authoritative energy.' Another tutor noted that 'the [HEARTS] group held the tutor and the other trainees spellbound ... it was the first time in a number of years in which I had the feeling that these individuals were animated and passionate and coming alive'. The element of challenge in the workshops also enhanced students' enjoyment and sense of achievement.

## Personal development and confidence

Students claimed to have developed confidence and to have improved their self-esteem and motivation as a result of HEARTS, feelings they could help to pass on to their pupils.

*It helps to let you know that you're not perfect at everything, but that doesn't mean that you can't help someone else be better at it. Just to encourage others to keep going and to try – if you're not very good, they might be better – it's about encouragement.*

*Student*

They recognised their newly-acquired skills and felt motivated to use them in the classroom and to continue developing them in their own time. By building confidence in their artistic skills, students developed the conviction that they were well-equipped to teach the arts to their pupils, even when this conviction had been absent before. The enjoyment students took from HEARTS also acted as a motivational drive. As one tutor commented:

There was a sense that they themselves could produce all of this wonderful stuff. So it is confidence in yourself, which I think you have to have. If you're going to go and communicate something to children, the best place to come from is a real confidence and enthusiasm in yourself.

*Tutor*

Other tutors noted similar gains in general confidence and motivation in their HEARTS students. 'They have developed a huge amount of confidence in their teaching practice, not just in the arts. Their confidence in delivering the general arts curriculum has improved, but also their understanding of their role as a teacher.'

More particularly, tutors stressed the importance of confidence in arts education too.

Many of the students have gained in confidence and developed a range of skills that they wouldn't have had before. They are now going to approach the arts, not with trepidation but with some rigour and vision, which is really important.

*Tutor*

The students have become much more assertive and confident to work in their own arts areas. Confidence in the arts is incredibly important in teaching, as opposed to particular skills. It's having confidence to work something out for themselves – they don't do that these days, they download things off the internet which is very damaging to their self-confidence and their ability to construct teaching for themselves.

*Tutor*

### **Enhanced confidence in employment prospects**

Some students said they felt that their employment prospects may have been enhanced in the light of their HEARTS experience.

I presume it will look pretty good on my CV. It will give me that little bit extra in that area of the curriculum and enhance my experience. Schools are beginning to realise it's a vital element of the learning process and will be looking for people able to use those areas in their teaching.

*Student*

They began to recognise the importance of arts in education, particularly given recent government policy, and were keen to capitalise on the opportunities that HEARTS presented. One student hoped that the push towards creativity in schools would make her more marketable and said, 'If we didn't learn it, we would be a bit left behind when we qualify.'

#### 4.2.6 Innovation, risk and rigour

All HEARTS projects introduced approaches which were new in the context prevailing in each UDE at the time, though there was debate amongst some of the older members of staff (as there was in the management group) about the extent to which the approaches were, in fact, really new or merely resurrected from that fast-fading educational past before the imposition of Standards, Ofsted inspections and the TTA. Nonetheless, for the great majority of students and staff, the approaches developed in HEARTS were unequivocally *new* and it was as startling as it was chastening to note that many students referred to HEARTS as being the first time that they had been asked to create their own teaching programmes, rather than simply delivering off-the-shelf ones.

Taking risks rather than sticking to the safe territory of pre-existing lesson plans and familiar teaching approaches, turned out to be unfamiliar to most students. Many expressed anxiety about taking on responsibility for projects the outcomes of which were unpredictable. Was failure permitted, especially when qualification relied upon meeting the Standards? The quality of work by students in schools came under scrutiny in more than one UDE, with lack of rigour, focus and attention to essential skill-learning being cited as possible 'collateral damage' of the HEARTS experiment. The dilemma concerning the balance of risk and rigour was summarised by one tutor in this way.

That's where some of the compromises were, I think, in the quality of what children did. Some of it was excellent, but some of it was a bit sloppy. How do you make it less sloppy? Well you return to some kind of formula in teaching which is pretty predictable and you can increase a certain quality. But we weren't really interested in that; we knew how to do that. How do you get something that is more pupil-led and therefore meaningful and in the end has more aesthetic quality and depth to it? The compromises, if they are compromises, are something you have to live through, and you might not produce results that you could produce if you followed other methods. If you're supervising that sort of activity you have to be willing to let it go a bit and whether standards will slip – well maybe, sort of, but they don't have to in the longer term.

*Tutor*

The final point is fundamental. The HEARTS projects in the UDEs were conducted in a context in which compliance to Standards, the demonstrable performance of 'competences', and evidence of required knowledge as testament to the ability to teach had been of dominating and unquestioned importance for many years – in departmental ethos and in the minds of the students who studied within it. HEARTS, by contrast, seems to have encouraged students to step off into unknown territory as they engaged with the arts, and with their pupils' learning of the arts in the classroom. A tutor grappled with how these two apparently contradictory positions could be reconciled.

We suspect there is a relationship between the risk-orientated way the students were being asked to work and the quality of what they produced. We are keen that this is picked up on. It's the first year and we've learned a few lessons. Every time you take a risk there's likely to be a deficit in the outcomes, and that may well be it. A number of students seemed to be happy with fairly low levels of attainment. But what they were trying to do in knitting together ideas was often very strong. It was the level of skill and understanding in the individual disciplines which was lacking. These students have had no input in many of these arts subjects since the first year. So we've probably done quite a lot to move them on a little from where they would have been had they not done the project.

*Tutor*

Many students, at first hesitant, unsure and shy of risking the unknown, subsequently report deriving great satisfaction and sense of achievement from having had the courage, finally, to undertake their HEARTS projects.

# 5 What HEARTS achieved

HEARTS was designed to revitalise the diminishing impact of arts in the experience of primary student teachers. It was also the hope of its designers that it would allow the exploration of new approaches to the education of teachers, given the ways in which the system operated at the time. We must weigh the achievements of the project against these overarching intentions, at the same time asking whether its guiding principles were met in practice.

## 5.1 Innovation and experiment

There is no question that all six UDEs designed new experiences for their students focused on the arts, though one was already familiar with *carnival* and used the HEARTS opportunity to build out from previous practice rather than to introduce it as completely new. There is evidence among all participants that new ideas and fresh practices were developed in terms of the arts curriculum; of ways of working with artists and teachers; in the relationship between tutorial staff and students; in the use (in some cases) of sites external to the campus; and in the time claimed by tutorial staff to think carefully about the underlying issues and concepts entailed in teaching the arts to children. None of the UDEs were complete beginners in primary school arts; all had a background in the field. What HEARTS allowed, however, was the time for staff to concentrate collectively on the arts in their work with much more intensity and focus than had been the case before. It allowed them to consider the relationship of this work to teacher education as a whole, and this meant that connections were made with colleagues from different subject traditions elsewhere in their UDEs. HEARTS also introduced a discipline into tutors' work (in terms of spending schedules, meeting project deadlines, providing periodic reports, etc.) which, before, had not been so open to the scrutiny of others – and certainly not in the context of a nation-wide initiative. Tutors working in all six HEARTS projects, then, innovated and experimented.

Furthermore, they required students to do the same, working in what were new and challenging ways with skills and processes about which many knew very little. Sometimes, this felt disturbing. By the end, however, the great majority of those who had experienced it testified to a satisfaction, even an exhilaration, with what they had been doing. As was seen in the last section of this *Report*, HEARTS has fostered innovation and experiment in student teachers and has changed their practice as a result. It is not possible yet to say whether, once they take up their professional posts, the changes will continue, but there is no reason to doubt that they will.

## 5.2 Continuity and sustainability

In one UDE, institutional changes involving, *inter alia*, news of the closure of the teacher education campus and the removal of its work to the main university campus sixty miles away, occurred as HEARTS was going on, and has meant the question of sustainability is harder to predict than in the other five. However, there is evidence that, despite this concern, the experience of HEARTS will continue – not least in the presence among staff of greater levels of knowledge and understanding about the complex field of the artistic imagination and how this might be inspired in the lives of primary school children.

Elsewhere among the six, accounts are common of new modules being introduced, or new ways of approaching the work of existing modules, which derive directly from HEARTS experiments. In more than one UDE, the staff involved have described the impact of HEARTS on their work with students as having been transformative. Furthermore, several tutorial staff have reported significant transformations in their personal practice as a result – not least (in one case) registration for a doctorate, in several others, a new impetus to publish in journals, to write book chapters and to speak in national fora and in yet others a renewed personal involvement in artistic practice.

By the end of its second year, there were few signs of decaying trajectory. Although, as has been made clear elsewhere in this *Report*, the national context was more congenial as HEARTS progressed, and though the strict

regulatory environment was becoming a little less authoritarian, for the six UDEs HEARTS has been a significant experience which would not otherwise have happened, and its impact seems set to continue. A tutor from one of the first three UDEs recently wrote about engaging a new cohort of students in HEARTS a year after the event.

... over the last two weeks we have [had] the most remarkable HEARTS experience to date. We certainly hope that our video, images and students' responses (which we will be substantiating with interviews over the next two weeks) will provide an even stronger justification for why we believe thoroughly in this approach to teacher education.

That is a good sign for the future.

### 5.3 Trans-disciplinary work

It was not a definitive criterion that participating UDEs should necessarily work across a range of arts, though it was a preference in coming to funding decisions because it better reflected conditions in the primary school. In the event, all six UDEs undertook projects which involved two or more arts, at least one being the creation of a new form (*carnival*) made from others. In addition, most UDEs involved new media in the photography, video and sound recording which they used to record HEARTS work (a CD Rom becoming, in itself, an artefact showing other artefacts and arts productions). Students learned important new visual and communication skills in making them.

There are problems associated with cross-disciplinary work in the arts, arising from logistics (where to find the spaces, for instance, which will allow joint activities in, say, theatre and pottery-making) and from conceptual clarity (drawing a portrait allows more intensive focus than producing a pageant). In departmental terms, trans-disciplinary work in HEARTS sometimes meant that staff from different art areas were asked to collaborate in work with students – not always a familiar process and one which, in some cases, might have threatened a further loss of already eroded academic territory. It is also true that students, when confronted by projects which asked them to work in several forms, sometimes expressed initial anxiety

about a possible blurring of aims – a worrying circumstance for people who had been trained in the need for precision in their lesson planning. For all this, however, the experience by the end of the HEARTS projects was positive, as students and tutors, teachers and artists felt the benefits and excitements of working together.

In some UDEs, this trans-disciplinary experience will now help to inform the development of new course provision, some bringing together work from many arts, others using experiences gained in HEARTS and applying them in course design across the wider curriculum.

## 5.4 Partnership

HEARTS began as a partnership of funders and continued as a partnership of first three and then six participating UDEs, together with the management group. One of its defining characteristics has been the sequence of *planning and progress residencies* which brought people together in discussions and practical activities. These have allowed an invigorating ethos to emerge and



Foxton – sharing

offered solidarity to people who were attempting something they had not done before.

This *Report* has also given an account of the partnerships which helped define the experience of HEARTS back on their campuses for those involved. First, there was the partnership of the staff themselves who led their HEARTS projects; then the many collaborations enacted between these staff and others in their departments – not least, their senior managers (without whose support HEARTS would have failed). There were partnerships across subject boundaries (see above), and with artists and arts groups. No UDE can operate without its many school partnerships, but the HEARTS project gives evidence of many special approaches made to small groups, or even individual schools to participate as partners. In some cases, as well, alliances were made or strengthened with colleagues from local education authorities.

Finally, a consistent theme in the accounts of many of the UDEs has been a refreshing of the partnership between tutorial staff and students. Working in the arts has jolted the familiar relationship between teacher and taught as, in so many cases, they have found they were learning together. This *Report* has referred elsewhere to the evolution of such 'democratic pedagogies' as being one enactment of the principle of partnership in the HEARTS project.

## 5.5 Dissemination

A body of materials, mentioned elsewhere in this *Report*, now exists in each UDE which wasn't there before, though more work needs to be done to make this available across the sector to others who might find it valuable. This could become an important part of the need for 'legacy' built into the design specifications for HEARTS. Some tutors from HEARTS UDEs have published papers and at least one book chapter as a result of their project. A group from all six UDEs gave a workshop presentation to the annual Conference of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) in November 2006. A small seminar was attended by representatives of the funding agencies, national organisations and participants from primary teacher education, etc. at the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation in January 2007. NFER has published an *Executive Summary of the HEARTS project 2004–2006* (January

2006) as well as this *Report*. The HEARTS website ([www.hearts.uk.com](http://www.hearts.uk.com)) will make some of these materials readily available to those who would find them useful.

## 5.6 And the arts?

In six UDEs, students learning to be primary teachers, together with their tutors, participated in sessions involving the arts. These extended in many cases to involve artists. Their activities included teachers and children at school and at least one also included members of the local community. In another, significant practitioners and commentators on the arts in education participated as conference speakers. Thinking about the arts in the context of children's education, and reading, writing and talking about them, has gone on in those university departments to a significantly greater extent than would otherwise have been the case. This move towards a restoration of curriculum balance, if it has not already begun, can now spread elsewhere within the system and others will be able to learn from the HEARTS project as they make this happen in their own organisations.

\*

In terms of its original design, then, it is reasonable to claim much success in meeting the aims of HEARTS and in acknowledging its achievements.

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## HEARTS Higher Education, the Arts and Schools

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HEARTS demonstrated the potential of partnership and cross-curricular working. Students felt 'regenerated and enthused', with more confidence in the arts as part of their training, and strengthened conviction about the value of arts in education.

This is important reading to all those training to teach, to teacher educators and to all those keen to see arts incorporated as a significant part of the teacher training curriculum.



An initiative funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA)

Price £7.00  
ISBN 978 1 905314 42 3

